



Evaluating the 2004-2009 phase of Australia's National Drug Strategy: Challenges and implementation framework

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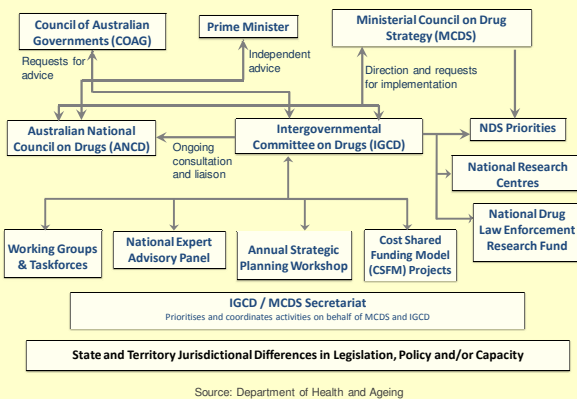
With the support of the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy (MCDS) and the Inter-governmental Committee on Drugs (IGCD), the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing has commissioned Siggins Miller to evaluate the current (2004-2009) phase of the National Drug Strategy (NDS).

Core evaluation team members: Dr Mary-Ellen Miller, Prof Ian Siggins, Prof Robert Bush, Prof Wayne Hall, David McDonald, Geraldine Cleary, Dr Sally Hsueh-Chih Lai, Bonnie Ho

The National Drug Strategy: 2004-2009 Principles and Approaches

- Harm Minimisation
- Comprehensive and Balanced
- Cross-Sectoral Partnerships
- Evidence-Informed

Advisory Structure



Programs

There are many activities that reflect the NDS even though they are not addressed in this evaluation or directly linked with the implementation of the NDS.

The following national programs are directly funded or explicitly implemented under the NDS framework:

- National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre
- National Comorbidity Initiative
- National Drug Research Centres of Excellence
- National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund
- Cost Shared Funding Model
- National Drug Strategy Campaigns
- Community Partnerships Initiative
- Non-Government Organisation Treatment Grants Program
- National Illicit Drug Diversion Initiative
- Amphetamine-type Stimulants Grants Program

Research and data systems

The following national data collections are considered of national significance to the NDS:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics Causes of Death collection
- Alcohol and Other Drugs Treatment Services National Minimum Data set
- Australian School Student Alcohol & Drug Survey
- Clients of Needle Syringe Programs (NSP Survey)
- Drug Use Monitoring in Australia
- Ecstasy and related Drugs Reporting System
- Illicit Drug Reporting System
- National Coroners' Information System
- National Drugs Strategy Household Survey
- National Health Survey
- National Opioid Pharmacotherapy Statistics Annual Data
- National Prison Entrants' Blood Borne Virus and Risk Behaviour Survey
- National Survey of Mental Health and Well-being of Adults

The NDS Evaluation Framework

The current phase of the NDS is being evaluated in terms of its:

1. Policy framework
2. Program outcomes
3. Advisory structures
4. Performance and capacity to monitor drug trends and issue

These 4 key Components of the NDS are assessed with respect to their effectiveness, efficiency, future needs and processes for improvement.

Issues & Challenges

- **Changing contexts** even while the evaluation was being implemented
- **Complexity of effort** large-scale, multi-intervention, multi-sector and multiple levels of government
- **Boundary setting** defining the scope of evaluation
- **Agreeing on the evaluation questions**
- **Identifying key stakeholders**
- **Identifying the outcomes of NDS programs**
- **Attribution** the contributions of the NDS to changes in drug use and drug-related harm

Evaluation Method

Approaches

- Systems Approach
- Program Logic
- Contribution Analysis

Data Sources

- Documentation and Literature Reviews
- Stakeholder Consultations
- Case Studies

Learnings

- **Establishing and maintaining mutually-respectful partnerships:** immediate relationship with the client, the IGCD-appointed Evaluation Project Working Group, ANCD, IGCD
- **Addressing the expectations of the AOD sector**
- **Evaluation needs to be able to respond to changes in context that occur during the evaluation**
- **Integrating different types of data and information via the mixed methods approach**
- **Acknowledging and responding to limitations in data availability**
- **Using a combined program logic and attribution analysis approach is helpful where data are unavailable**

Next Steps

It is expected that the findings and recommendations of this evaluation would inform the development of the next phase of the NDS.